Washougal
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Images of America

Washougal was founded in 1880, nine years before Washington was a state. The first settlers were from New York, Norway, Minnesota, Britain, Germany and Ohio. Trappers and sailors became farmers, staking donation land claims in 1850. Some married Native American women and started families.

Washougal was the core of one such a family. Betsey White Wing was a Chinook princess who married Richard Ough, a British sailor stationed at the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver. Part of their 633 acres of shore and woodland became a town and their children peopled Washougal for generations. The Oughs were married in 1838. First they stayed at Fort Vancouver. In the 1840s Richard bought land from a fellow settler for $45, a horse, a saddle, and a few loaves of fresh-baked bread. Richard registered his property as part of a donation land claim. In 1880 the Oughs sold 20 acres to pioneer Joe E. Durgan and Capt. Lewis Love, who would found Washougal.
In 1897.

Charles Cottrell built a gristmill and sawmill on the Washougal River. Farmers brought sacks of grain from as far away as Amboy and Eureka for grinding. The mills closed in 1915 and the building became a machine and repair shop. In 1910 Charles Cottrell began his biggest venture. He and his son Glenn built three dams on the Washougal River and established the Western Light and Power Company. They supplied power to Camas and Washougal. Parts of the lower dam can still be seen.

Jorgan and Henrik Henriksen built a store and grange hall in the middle of Washougal, dividing it into "east Washougal" and "west Washougal." The store also contained tthe first CamasWashougal telephone company.

Early travel was by wagon or on foot, and men were known to walk from Vancouver to Cape Horn carrying 100-pound sacks. A stagecoach took 14 hours to make a round trip from Washougal to Vancouver. Pendleton Woolen Mills has been part of the Washougal community since 1912. The facility is still owned and operated by the Bishop family.